

FCNC Candidate Questionnaire for Colby Khoshreza, District 9 Candidate

1. Please describe your principal reasons for wanting to serve on the Council and your involvement with neighborhoods. What are the two highest-priority issues affecting neighborhoods in your district, and what solutions do you propose?

I am running for this position because I care deeply about Lexington want our city to continue to be one that is safe, clean, beautiful, and welcoming to all people. I have lived in the 9th district for the last 15 years and have been involved in our community as both a board member and volunteer with many organizations including DanceBlue, CASA, Family Counseling Service, United Way, and God's Pantry. I previously served as Executive Director of the UK Center for Community Outreach which provided partnerships and service engagements with non-profits and neighborhoods throughout Lexington.

The safety and wellbeing of our neighborhoods is my top concern. We must continue strong funding for our public safety division. I am a supporter of a consistent level of funding for safety so that police officers and firefighters have adequate resources and manpower. I am committed to fostering relationships and communication between neighborhood associations and police; hosting frequent district-wide forums that educate citizens on crime prevention tips; and establishing and supporting neighborhood crime watch programs.

A second area of concern is growth and the corresponding traffic that is correlated to that expansion. We must be strategic and thoughtful about managing our transportation systems. We should increase efforts to promote and enhance mass transit services including establishment of rapid transit lanes to make for faster mass transit travel. The Re-Imagine Nicholasville Road project is looking to improve travel and I support these efforts. It is also important that we continue to look at change of turn lanes, traffic light timing, and emphasize the building of more walkable communities.

2. Lexington has seen a significant need for affordable housing in recent years, especially for the most economically challenged; and the new 2020/21 budget proposes significant cuts in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund allocation and staffing. As Councilmember, what strategies would you offer for affordable housing?

The city's role in guiding housing access is key to ensuring that citizens are healthy and safe and have a decent place to call home. Lexington should continue to look for ways to increase affordable housing while ensuring the integrity and stability of existing neighborhoods. I support full funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to incentivize developers to create affordable housing options. As we grow inside the boundary, we must also increase housing diversity by remaining open to a variety of housing options – single-family, multi-family, and mixed-use developments. These diverse types of development can be beautiful and complement existing neighborhoods when they are thoughtfully planned and well designed. Apartments, condos, and townhomes provide housing at a variety of price points which will allow citizens of different budgets to have a place to call home.

3. The novel coronavirus and resultant economic downturn has had a disproportionate impact on Lexington's most vulnerable communities. In this time of economic emergency, what are your priorities for social services and for workforce and small business recovery?

The City has a responsibility to support our emergency shelters and non-profits that provide mental and community health services to at-risk and vulnerable populations. We need to ensure funding for these agencies while partnering with community leaders to raise the amounts that may be temporarily unavailable

from tax dollars. These agencies provide critical services, and our community wellbeing is reliant on having these safety nets available for our citizens who need them.

The sooner we can reopen businesses in a safe manner, the sooner our businesses will be able to begin a recovery process. Going forward, our local government should partner with Commerce Lexington and other agencies to develop a Local Lexington campaign that promotes and drives customers to local businesses in Fayette County.

4. What do you believe are the most critical needs and most effective avenues for improving public safety in your district and in the city as a whole?

First, we must continue strong funding for our public safety division. I support a consistent level of funding for safety so that police officers and firefighters have adequate resources and manpower. We currently spend 57% of our general fund on safety and we should continue that commitment going forward. Second, I am dedicated to fostering relationships and communication between neighborhood associations and police. A good council member will be a liaison between police and neighborhoods to help address ongoing crime issues, establish and reevaluate patrol routes in response to crime, and work with neighborhoods to establish and improve crime watch programs. Finally, I would host frequent district-wide forums that educate citizens on crime prevention tips while also communicating and soliciting feedback from residents on a more frequent basis.

5. To what extent do you find Lexington's current zoning enforcement, code enforcement and building inspection adequate, and how would you propose to improve them? Do you support instituting rental licensing and inspection for Lexington in the near future?

Currently, we do not have adequate code enforcement staffing or resources in Lexington. Ideally, we need additional funding for more enforcement officers. However, given our budget constraints, this is unlikely in the near term. I do not support requiring rental licensing and inspections at this time because we do not have adequate staffing or resources within local government to accommodate a licensing and inspection program. Going forward, once our budget situation improves, we can have a healthy discussion on establishing a rental licensing program.

6. Council is currently reviewing an Accessory Dwelling Unit ZOTA, a change in the zoning ordinance to permit and regulate independent second dwellings, including units for rent, on single-family lots. Do you support the ordinance as currently proposed or in some other form? Do you find the proposed ADU zoning suitable for neighborhoods in your district? Should it be adopted city-wide or decided differently for different locations?

Lexington needs to be very cautious in their approach to considering or allowing ADUs. More specifically, I have two major areas of concern. The first is the recognition of significant neighborhood opposition to the proposed ADU ordinance. It is paramount that if ADUs are allowed in Lexington that we garner consensus and support from neighborhoods. Neighborhoods need to agree that 1) ADUs are right for Lexington and 2) the proposed ADU ordinance sets appropriate guidelines to protect the existing climate and character of neighborhoods. Our neighborhoods rightfully expect an ADU ordinance to make consideration of parking needs, design aesthetic, and require owner-occupancy or a maximum occupancy limit as part of any ADU ordinance. My second concern is that we simply do not have adequate code enforcement staffing to monitor ADUs. Currently, we have limited manpower struggling to enforce our existing codes. If we pass new ordinances to allow ADUs, then we must be prepared to have adequate staffing to enforce those ordinances.

Given our current budget difficulties, we are unlikely to be able to commit funding for new positions to enforce ADU ordinances.

7. Council is currently reviewing business and revenue ordinances to require registration, licensing, and hotel tax for short-term rentals like Airbnb. Do you support these ordinances? Do you recommend changing or adopting zoning ordinances at the same time, to allow short-term rentals in residential zones or restrict them?

Short-term rentals should be required to be registered and pay applicable taxes in the same manner that hotels are taxed. I support allowing short-term rentals in residential zones – however, with reasonable restrictions. Other cities have set guidelines that allow only a certain number of short-term rentals in a specific neighborhood or restrict the number of short-term rentals per X number of feet. Reasonable restrictions on short-term rentals would allow them to continue while being respectful of neighborhood concerns regarding overcrowding of such rentals in any particular neighborhood.

8. What are the priority transportation and mobility needs in your district, including those of motorists, bus riders, cyclists and walkers, and how would you meet them?

We must be strategic and thoughtful about managing our transportation systems. We should increase efforts to promote and enhance mass transit services including establishment of rapid transit lanes to make for faster mass transit travel. Our mass transit should also offer improved covered shelters so riders have adequate shelter when the weather is uncooperative. I fully support the Re-Imagine Nicholasville Road Project which is focused on improving travel on that roadway. This plan will take into consideration traffic, pedestrian access, and ongoing growth along this very busy major corridor. It is also important that we continue to evaluate the change of turn lanes, traffic light timing, and adding more bicycle lanes throughout our city. Emphasizing the building of more walkable communities will allow less congestion on major arterial roadways by allowing citizens to walk to some of their basic amenities.

9. How urgent or important today is historic preservation (HP) and protecting Lexington's historic places from demolition? What strategies would you recommend? Should the city restore funds for HP staffing and the studies required to identify both individual historic assets and districts that qualify for National Register listing, historic tax credits and local H-1 designation?

Historic preservation is an important tool to protect our buildings, our neighborhoods, and our rich history. It is necessary to consider HP as part of our planning and growth strategy and staffing is required to execute HP initiatives. We must identify areas where H-1 is appropriate and buildings that should be protected. We must remain mindful of the delicate balance between infill and redevelopment and new housing needs throughout our city and the desire for historic preservation. Both of these concerns need to be carefully considered as we grow inside the boundary.

10. What do you see as the environmental impact on our neighborhoods of an urban growth strategy focused on intensive infill and redevelopment? How do you assess our water and air quality, trees, greenspace, flood control, etc.) in this context?

If done correctly, Lexington can grow in a way that protects its existing urban neighborhoods. Infill and redevelopment must be strategically assessed by our planning division in order to benefit and complement existing neighborhoods. The city must continue to focus on and put resources behind our air and water quality divisions as well invest in the protection and maintenance of our urban forestry. We must also be

vigilant about conserving select greenspace in our urban setting and maintaining our beautiful parks and trees in and around neighborhoods.

11. Do you find that the 2018 Comprehensive Plan policies and processes clearly, fairly and effectively guide decision making on zone changes and development plans for your District and for Lexington as a whole?

The comprehensive plan has at times been difficult for both neighborhoods and developers to navigate. Still, it provides a framework that allows for responsible growth. It is very important that developers engage in meaningful participation with neighborhoods regarding zone changes and new development plans. It is equally important that neighborhoods remain open to new development opportunities – even when they are close to their own neighborhoods. Growth is not easy – and we all need to be willing to listen and work together as we experience further urban growth. Going forward, we will need to review the 2018 Comprehensive plan and evaluate the parts that worked well as well as those that have more been more difficult to implement and modify accordingly. As a Councilmember I will be committed to keeping my neighborhoods informed and to also advocating for their concerns at city hall.

12. What or where, in your view, are the “downtown” and “corridors” in Lexington most suited for intensive growth and development, within your District, and in the urban county as a whole? Similarly where is there “underutilized land” that would be most suitable for development? More generally, what are your land-use priorities for the neighborhoods in your district? What development is missing, and what is to be protected?

The Versailles road corridor is an area of Lexington that could benefit from significant infill and redevelopment opportunity.

13. What is your vision for preserving the integrity and character of our urban neighborhoods even as we protect Lexington's signature rural area?

Protecting our rural area does not mean we have to sacrifice the beauty and character of our urban neighborhoods. We must consult with our neighborhoods regarding proposed developments and consider new developments in or around existing neighborhoods with careful consideration. It is also important to conserve dedicated areas of green space in neighborhoods, preserve and maintain our beautiful parks, and wisely manage our traffic flow and transportation systems. We must look to build more neighborhoods that are walkable to amenities and encourage mixed-use development. It is important that we continue to hold developers accountable to produce high quality living spaces– especially as we look to build more high-density housing to accommodate a growing population.

14. What key issues do you identify in revenue, expenditures, bonding, tax incentives, etc. in light of a long-term trend of LFUCG expenditures growing faster than revenue? What avenues for achieving a better balance look most promising considering not only the current economic crisis but thereafter?

It is crucial that our local government bring their expenses in line with existing revenue. This will require us to think more creatively as we look at our budget in order to find cost savings. A fresh perspective can be helpful in reevaluating our processes and looking for new ways to save money as we go forward. I remain open minded about generating new revenue but generally favor looking at other options outside of increasing the occupational tax. We must also limit or cap our bonding at ten percent annually to remain in a fiscally sound position.